

Sleep & Autism

Your local autism information hub



Sleep Difficulties Are Common!

Sleep difficulties are experienced by between 40-80% of individuals with autism, so it is important to know that you are not alone and there are things you can do to help!

This poster will provide you with useful information and tips (supported by research) that you can start implementing today!

Sleep Tips!

By reaching out to carers, we were able to collect the following tips for improving sleep. When implementing these, make sure that they are tailored to your own needs!

Sleep Environment

Good sleep habits and behaviours are important for getting the most out of your sleep. One way to improve sleep is to improve your sleep environment, such as by:

- Having a clean, cool room.
- Ensuring the room is dim and undisturbed by external light – blackout curtains are good for this!
- Creating white noise to drown out external sounds, such as by using a fan or binaural beats.
- Using certain smells, such as lavender oil, as aromatherapy.
- Buying a weighted blanket to help with sensory difficulties (check weight requirements for safety)

Sleep Routine

Carers and research have emphasised the importance of developing a sleep routine structured around your own needs.

In order for this routine to be most efficient, it is important its features are kept to regularly, such as by waking up and going to sleep at the same time each day.

It may be useful to encourage this by having regular pre-sleep activities, like some wind-down time or having a snack.

Below is an example of a good sleep routine:

Jimmy has a regular bedtime of 8:30pm. For half hour before going to bed, they make sure to wind-down by putting away their phone and doing some colouring while enjoying a glass of milk.

After this time, Jimmy gets ready for bed and helps make sure that his bedroom is sleep ready!

When ready, Jimmy says goodnight and dims his lights, time for sleep!

Sleepy Foods

There are several food groups that you can eat to improve sleep! These include:

- Milk and milk products (including cheese)
- Fish and meats
- Fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds
- Pulses
- Grains
- Bread

For more information on specific sleep foods and some recipe ideas, visit:

Sleep Interventions

After meeting with a sleep consultant, you may be offered parent education support, behavioural interventions and/or sleep medication.

In Northamptonshire, this specialised treatment can be received through Sleep Right. For more information, visit:

For further information, visit the sleep section on En-Fold's website at: